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Ohio State Engineer

Title: Ohio's Own

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Issue Date: May-1938

Publisher: Ohio State University, College of Engineering

Citation: Ohio State Engineer, vol. 21, no. 6 (May, 1938), 7-9.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/35522>

Appears in Collections: [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 21, no. 6 \(May, 1938\)](#)

OHIO'S OWN

By ELBERT J. BOEBINGER

VI. THE STATE HIGHWAY PATROL

LAW is essential to civilization. As long as civilization exists there will be among us those who insist upon gaining a definite object regardless of the life, honor, and happiness of themselves and their fellow men. Criminals for centuries have relied upon unguarded highways and byways of the countryside as channels of escape. Refuge from hot pursuit was sought in rural lanes where the pursuers might be confounded, where the farmer folk and their sheriffs, indeed, were scarcely aware that a crime had been committed. The law made a mockery of justice while offenders against society trickled through police agencies, gained the open country and began their depredations anew. The wild west movie films, familiar to all of us, give excellent examples of the skill required to combat the outlaw.

The Royal Northwest Mounted Police of Canada, created in 1873, launched the first effectively organized effort in North America to safeguard rural districts, by pursuing and apprehending criminals over a vast area, formerly almost devoid of protection. Even earlier, in 1835 the Texas Rangers had been established as a military patrol on the Mexican border. The first actual state police force in the United States was created in Massachusetts in 1865.

In view of the increased number of law violations in Ohio, the ninetieth general assembly enacted in March, 1933, a law establishing as a division of the highway department, a State Highway Patrol. This law declared the following to be the responsibilities of the highway patrol:

1. Enforcement of highway traffic laws.
2. Enforcement of motor vehicle laws.
3. Enforcement of all laws relating to the protection of State Highway property.
4. Investigation and reporting of violations of the excise tax laws governing motor vehicle liquid fuels.
5. Investigation and reporting of violations of rules and regulations governing motor carriers.
6. The investigation and reporting of motor vehicle accidents on the state highways outside of incorporated municipalities.
7. Promotion of highway safety.

The legislation further provided that highway patrolmen shall never be used as peace officers in connection with any strike or labor dispute. Patrolmen do not have the right or power of search nor the right

or power to seize except to take from any person under arrest or about to be arrested deadly or dangerous weapons in the possession of such a person. The powers and duties conferred on the State Highway Patrol are supplementary to and in no way a limitation on the powers or duties of sheriffs or other peace officers of the state.

The chief executive of the State Highway Patrol is the superintendent who is appointed by the director of highways. The state furnishes the State Highway Patrol with such vehicles, equipment and supplies as is deemed necessary by the director of highways. It is the duty of the superintendent, with the approval of the director of highways, to prescribe rules and regulations and fix the hours for duty of patrolmen. It is the duty of the superintendent to establish districts in the state and to assign to such districts such number of patrolmen as he may deem proper. He may transfer patrolmen from one district to another and may classify and rank members. All promotions to a higher rank must be made from the next lower rank. To portray the organization of the highway patrol, it is well to begin with a patrol sub-station. The sub-station is supervised by a corporal. He is responsible for the affairs within the patrol area surrounding the sub-station. The personnel of his command numbers

Traveling Headquarters



two to four patrolmen depending upon the requirements of that patrol area. There are twenty-three existing sub-stations throughout the state. All non-commissioned officers are required to live at the sub-station to which they are assigned. They are subject to call at any time and may be recalled from leave in case of emergency. Due to the small number of patrolmen, they must serve on active duty as much as twelve hours or more daily and are never assigned to a definite schedule of hours. They are not permitted a leave of absence on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays.

The state is sub-divided into five patrol districts for administrative purposes. Each district comprises from five to seven sub-stations except the small headquarters district which has only one station. Each district is supervised by a lieutenant, excepting headquarters district which is supervised by a sergeant. Assisting the lieutenant are two sergeants responsible for the execution of all duties by the patrolmen under their charge. A radio broadcasting station is located in each of the four district headquarters and at general headquarters. The lieutenant and all other commissioned officers are permitted to reside at their respective homes if their residence is within reasonable proximity of the district headquarters. However, the non-commissioned officers assigned to district headquarters must reside there as mentioned in the case of sub-stations. From the district, the next unit is the general headquarters or office of the superintendent which is the control point for all districts. Representing the superintendent as commander of the uniform division is the captain, who plans and organizes operations necessary to the successful execution of the responsibilities of the organization. The assistant superintendent is charged with certain administration and control operations as delegated by the superintendent. He also acts for the superintendent in his absence.

The highway patrol is divided into four divisions,

Checking Wheel Loads



each division having a specific set of duties. These divisions are: investigation, communication, clerical, and uniform.

The function of the investigation division is to investigate and correct violations of the motor vehicle registration laws. This work also includes a periodic inspection of school buses with the assistance of the uniform division. The standards used in the inspection were set up by representatives of the State Department of Education, the Association of County School Superintendents of Ohio, and the Highway Patrol.

The function of the communication division is to transmit effectively messages relating to the apprehension and detection of criminals, and to transmit general information to mobile and fixed points throughout the state. The service of this division is not confined entirely to highway patrol. All law-enforcement agencies—federal, state, county, and municipal—are privileged and encouraged to employ the communication system in an effort to expedite apprehensions to prevent the commission of crime whenever possible.

Radio communication has been reinforced by teletype communication with the Atlantic Seaboard Police Teletype System, comprising the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. Approximately eight hundred police offices within the area of these seven states can be contacted by teletype.

The original plan, as devised for a communication system, consists of five radio broadcasting stations, conveniently and practically located at the approximate geographic center of each patrol district. Consequently, it is possible to direct practically all patrol activities by radio. Moreover, by this method, the accessibility of the communication system for other law-enforcement agencies is greatly facilitated. All of the radio stations operate on a frequency of 1596 kilocycles. The power of each is 400 watts, with the exception of the station at Findlay which is 500 watts.

The radio stations are maintained and operated by men who have qualified and passed the Federal Communication Commission's requirements. Qualifications depend upon efficiency in delivering broadcasts, such as the quality of the voice, speech inflection, and voice impediments. In addition to this, the operators must have a general knowledge of police procedure, and must be capable of handling communication traffic with commercial efficiency.

One of the primary services of the communication system is that it is capable of offering, to all law enforcement agencies, complete license and automobile information. Any law enforcement agency, requesting such information at any hour of the day, may receive within a period of five minutes an answer, consisting of the following information: name of the party to whom

license is issued, address of the registrant, type, make, model and motor number of vehicle.

The duties of the clerical division are to perform such duties as the accounting of expenditure, and the maintaining and compiling of reports, statistics, and records.

The uniform division has concentrated a major portion of its activity to the interest of highway safety. This program has been a policy of patrolling the highways or simply the presence of the uniform patrolman upon the highway. The mere presence of a uniform patrolman upon the highway is a powerful enforcement measure in itself. However, these men are capable of utilizing more forceful measures in the interest of highway safety when necessary since they are trained in traffic laws, first aid administration, and other means of assistance.

The program relative to the conservation of the public highway investment has been similar in policy to that of promoting highway safety. This work includes the inspection of commercial vehicles for size and weight in excess of that permitted by law and the arrest of those illegally possessing highway property or damaging it.

In order to establish a well trained personnel functioning in the capacity of highway patrolmen, it is necessary for those applying for such jobs to take a training course. Entering the highway patrol as a trooper and "getting on the force" in the old police days offers quite a contrast. Back then, weighing in at 180 or above and showing biceps that gave some promise of carrying authority in a street fight qualified the man. He was given a uniform, badge and gun and told to go out and enforce the law.

The preliminary requirements for an applicant to become a member of the State Highway Patrol is the acceptance or rejection of his application. He must be not less than twenty-one years of age nor more than forty. He must be at least five feet eight inches tall and weigh one hundred sixty-five pounds or more. Other physical requirements include physique, carriage, health, senses, voice, and reflexes. Mental requirements are: a high school education or the equivalent, successfully pass the standard Probst intelligence test, and successfully pass the police aptitude test. Character requirements include the investigation of the applicant's reputation, habits and record in his home community. Physique, health, senses and reflexes are examined through physical examination by the patrol physician. The applicant's civil, military, and police experience are also considered. It is not required, however, that an applicant have police experience.

If the applicant's preliminary requirements are satisfactory, he then enters the training period. The training school is conducted by the highway patrol and

extends over a period of from twelve to fourteen weeks.

The training period includes discipline, law, court procedure, evidence, first aid, communications, photography, fingerprinting, psychology, and other courses that are beneficial to the patrolman. He also learns the rules and regulations comprising administration of the patrol.

In addition to the regular curriculum, guest faculty speakers discuss particular phases of police science and other subjects dealing with modern police operations. Competent instructors are selected to train the cadets. Practically all instructors are experienced members of the organization. Thirty-five to forty cadets comprise the initial enrollment of each training school. Approximately one out of each three cadets enrolling in the training school fails to complete the course.

Upon finishing the third or probationary period, the cadet has completed his training school requirements. He is assigned to a patrol station to serve under the supervision of an experienced officer. All regular duties, including investigations, prosecutions, arrests, patrolling, etc., are performed in the presence of an experienced officer.

When the senior officer deems the prescribed patrolman qualified to represent the state as a highway patrolman, the probationary period ends and the rookie is eligible for certification pending his passing the required civil service examination.

The activities of the State Highway Patrol are not all in connection with the apprehension and detection of persons guilty of violations of the motor vehicle laws or of violations of laws not within patrol jurisdiction. In patrolling the state highways these men encounter many extra services which they must perform. Being extensively trained, they are relied upon by the public to know what to do in any emergency. Rescue and assistance in times of disaster such as floods, extreme snow and freezing weather, fire, and other catastrophes; aid to the ill, the injured, the destitute, and the helpless are examples of how these friends of the rural people descend from the role of the law enforcement officers to the role of ministering to the unfortunate. The versatile services rendered by these patrolmen and dependability upon their response to summons has acquired for them the respect of the rural communities throughout the state.

GULLIBILITY TEST

Students of the Syracuse University School of Journalism passed a "gullibility test" among their fellow students recently. The paper, at first glance, appeared to be a circulating petition to do away with senior examinations, while actually, it was a pledge to serve five years on a chain gang. One hundred fifteen seniors signed.